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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 002550

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ADCO](#) [ADPM](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: YEMEN-DPRK: SCUD REPAIRS, NO FUTURE MILITARY COOPERATION

REF: A. SANAA 4024

[B](#). SANAA 3853

[C](#). SANAA 1990

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull for Reasons 1.5 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Defense Minister Aliwa informed Ambassador on 10/20 that an August visit of North Korea's Deputy Minister of Industry had yielded agreement for DPRK experts to install replacement parts needed to restore defective SCUDs to operational status. In response to precise questioning by Ambassador, Aliwa stressed that the missiles would be repaired, not enhanced, and that the repairs would mark the end of Yemeni military cooperation with the DPRK. He noted that the ROYG had cancelled plans for North Korean construction of a naval facility at Hodeida, and was seeking an alternative contractor: perhaps China or Japan. Aliwa said he was briefing the Ambassador in accordance with Saleh's decision -- following the visits of U/S Bolton and NEA A/S Burns -- to end military cooperation with North Korea. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador, accompanied by DCM and OMC Chief, called on Defense Minister BG Abdullah Ali Aliwa on 10/20 at the latter's request. Aliwa was joined by senior military staff and Dirham Saidi of the MFA's Americas Desk. Aliwa explained that the virtually unprecedented attendance of an MFA representative at a MoD meeting reflected the ROYG's desire to maintain internal coordination of DPRK-related contacts with the U.S. Embassy.

SCUD Repairs

[1](#)3. (C) Aliwa said he had requested the meeting at the behest of President Saleh to "keep the USG in the picture" on ROYG contacts with North Korea. He noted that the briefing was consistent with Saleh's commitment -- following the 6/03 visit of U/S Bolton, as reviewed in the early October visit of NEA A/S Burns -- to end contacts with North Korea (refelts).

[1](#)4. (C) The Minister briefly recounted Yemen's "problem": some of the SCUDs received in 12/02 were non-functional because certain components were old and defective. At Yemen's request, a senior DPRK official -- the Deputy Minister of Industry -- had visited during August to discuss the matter. (Note: The visit was not/not publicized in Yemen. End Note) Yemen's demand for a monetary refund was not accepted, but after 10 days of negotiation a "solution" was agreed. North Korea is to send a team of experts with the spare parts necessary to restore the defective missiles to working order. They will come "soon," and remain as long as necessary to complete the job.

No Missile Upgrade; No Future Cooperation

[1](#)5. (C) Ambassador questioned Aliwa closely for further details. The Minister appeared unable to address technical aspects -- e.g. what parts are defective: propulsion? guidance? -- but gave repeated and emphatic assurance that the process would involve merely repair. There will be no upgrade, no extension of range, and no enhancement of missile capabilities in any respect. In response to further questioning, BG Aliwa stressed that there would be no further payment by Yemen, as the repairs were within the scope of the old agreement under which the missiles were delivered. Moreover, the presence of the North Korean technical team would not be prolonged or evolve into some new technical cooperation. They would depart once the work was complete, and Yemeni technicians were prepared to assume comprehensive responsibility for the SCUDs in Yemen's arsenal.

[1](#)6. (C) Ambassador reminded Aliwa that the USG had repeatedly made clear its view that Yemen should cease all contact with the DPRK, and that this was the outcome Washington wanted to see.

Hodeida Port: Seeking Alternative Contractors

16. (C) In response to follow-on questioning by Ambassador, Aliwa affirmed that Yemen had dropped plans for DPRK construction of a military port facility in Hodeida. He said the ROYG was seeking an alternative, perhaps China or Japan.

17. (C) Embassy Sanaa coordinates with Japanese Embassy on DPRK-related issues, and on 10/21 DCM briefed Japanese DCM on Aliwa's message. He said Japanese were unaware of the North Korean deputy minister's August visit to Yemen. He confirmed that Saleh had asked the recently arrived Japanese Ambassador for Tokyo to support Hodeida port construction. Japanese Ambassador declined, however, because of domestic legal constraints on aid projects with military applications.

Comment

18. (C) Aliwa's briefing seems to confirm the course the ROYG has steered on North Korea since U/S Bolton's 6/03 visit: visible action to curtail bilateral cooperation, but also a desire to get and keep the existing stock of SCUDs operational. The fact that the ROYG briefed the Embassy (albeit two months after the DPRK official's visit) is positive.
HULL